

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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### HINCHEY CALLS FOR MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

WASHINGTON – U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today called on Congress to pass a measure that would contain the costs of prescription drugs and provide a comprehensive prescription drug benefit to all Medicare beneficiaries. Hinchey was joined by several of his House colleagues and Senator Paul Wellstone (D-MN) at a press conference to announce the Medicare Extension of Drugs to Seniors (MEDS) Plan.

"Advances in medical science have created medicine that can cure diseases, control pain, and alleviate ailments of all kinds," said Hinchey. "But what good is that if no one can afford to buy the drugs? By giving a prescription drug benefit to Medicare beneficiaries and by taking additional steps to control costs, we will greatly increase access to these needed drugs."

In addition to extending Medicare to cover prescriptions, the legislation Hinchey proposes would also include a measure to allow for the reimportation of prescription drugs from international wholesalers and manufacturers. This measure, which would be free of the loopholes that caused former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala to reject a reimportation bill that passed in the last Congress, would reduce drug costs by increasing competition. The MEDS plan would also direct that drugs developed with taxpayer funds be subject to "reasonable price" agreements when patents are transferred to pharmaceutical companies.

"American consumers are subsidizing the prescription drug industry," added Hinchey. "It's about time we got something in return."